

church began to hold a prayer service at noon Monday through Friday, a tradition that continues today.

The church has grown as Bedford County has grown in recent years. Under the leadership of the church's current pastor, Larry James Crismon, Sr., Bright Temple has expanded its facilities and opened a community social service facility.

Shelbyville is a better place because of the work of the Bright Temple Church of God in Christ and its congregation. I congratulate Pastor Crismon and the congregation for all the good work they have done, and I wish them all the best in the next 75 years.

FREEDOM FOR RICARDO GONZALEZ ALFONSO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise today to speak about Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Gonzalez is the president of the Manuel Marquez Sterling Journalists Society and an independent reporter in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Gonzalez works and writes to inform the world about the gross human rights abuses that occur every day under the repressive regime of the Cuban dictator.

Unfortunately, writing and reporting the truth is not allowed under Castro's tyrannical dictatorship. All attempts to portray the absolute lack of freedom in totalitarian Cuba are viciously condemned and their authors are imprisoned or exiled. Mr. Gonzalez has been harassed by Castro's thugs since 1997, and on March 18, 2003, he was arrested for his insistence on publishing the truth about Castro's totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gonzalez was 53 years old when he was condemned to 20 years in Castro's gulag. The conditions in the Cuban totalitarian gulag are so atrocious as to almost guarantee that Mr. Gonzalez will not walk out if he were to have to serve the entirety of his sham sentence. Let me be very clear, Mr. Gonzalez has been sentenced to die in the gulag by the Cuban tyrant for writing the truth about Castro's brutal, repressive and disgusting regime.

Mr. Gonzalez's wife is calling for the governments of free nations, NGOs, and all those that cherish human rights to demand the release of her husband. I applaud her bravery and patriotism and join her cause. It is categorically unacceptable that men and women who demand freedom from tyranny are locked in the dungeons of monsters. The willful ignorance of Cuba's suffering under the Castro regime by much of the world's press, and most of the international community, amounts to aiding and abetting the Cuban dictatorship. Let us never forget and always support, those who are struggling to liberate their people from the grip of tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, we must cry out for the release of all those who languish in dungeons because they believe in human rights and freedom. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso and every prisoner of

conscience locked in Castro's totalitarian gulag.

TRIBUTE TO MR. VEE-JAY BRANN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Vee-Jay Brann of Hanford, California, on the occasion of his retirement as the Kings County Director of Finance.

With over 30 years of dedicated service to Kings County, Mr. Brann has demonstrated quality leadership alongside committed service to the residents of his community and the people of California.

Named after the day on which he was born, VJ Day, Vee-Jay grew up in the small Wisconsin town of Algoma. Upon graduation from Wisconsin State University Oshkosh with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1968, Mr. Brann entered the United States Air Force.

The great lure of the San Joaquin Valley drew Mr. Brann and he settled in Hanford. Mr. Brann continued his career as a Job Training Specialist until he became the Assistant Treasurer/Tax Collector for Kings County. Working diligently to create a welcoming atmosphere for his superior, he as appointed to fill the post of Treasurer/Tax Collector upon her retirement in 1985. That same year, Mr. Brann was pleasantly surprised with the birth of his son David. In May 2004, Mr. Brann resigned his position as Treasurer/Tax Collector to become Kings County's first Director of Finance.

Mr. Brann has served on many professional and social committees and boards. However he is most proud of serving as president of the California Association of Treasurer/Tax Collectors and being the president of the Hanford Rotary Club.

With all of his accomplishments, Mr. Brann's greatest pride continues to be his loving wife and son, his loyal and dedicated staff and his many friends and acquaintances.

While Mr. Brann looks forward to traveling, reading or trying his hand at gourmet cooking, the residents of Hanford will always remember the charismatic Vee-Jay Brann who served the community to the best of his ability.

HONORING DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, DC, AND THE DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1955

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the House to honor Dunbar High School, a legendary high school whose importance in American history is well known. I had the good fortune to graduate from Dunbar High School 50 years ago and my class has asked that I bring Dunbar's proud history to the attention of the House on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1955.

Dunbar High School was America's first public high school for African Americans and

rose to prominence in the era of segregation and remained segregated until 1954, when the District of Columbia was one of the six Brown v. Board of Education jurisdictions that successfully challenged segregated schools in the United States. Dunbar's excellence was so recognized and well known nationally that the best colleges and universities annually visited Dunbar to recruit students. An unusually large number of this country's most distinguished African Americans graduated from Dunbar. Among them are Edward Brooke, the first black Senator, Robert C. Weaver, the first black Cabinet member, Benjamin O. Davis, the first black general, Wesley Brown, the first black graduate of the Naval Academy, Charles R. Drew, the discoverer of blood plasma and Mary Jane Patterson, the first African American to achieve a college degree.

The 50th anniversary of the class of 1955 is another occasion for pride in our class and in our alma mater. Pride and gratitude as graduates of Dunbar High School, which prepared us so well for life and career. Pride in graduating from the first public high school in the United States for African Americans. Pride in Dunbar's storied history of educating so many African Americans who have made notable contributions to society. Pride that our alma mater encourages today's students to strive for the same excellence Dunbar encouraged in our class. And pride that we can celebrate magnificent, irreplaceable, and lasting memories of the fun and fellowship we shared together.

For all these reasons and more, I take special pleasure in congratulating our class, Dunbar High School Class of 1955, on our 50th anniversary. I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Class of 1955 and in recognizing the historic achievements on Dunbar High School itself.

ON RECENT COMMENTS OF THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT, MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD

HON. JAMES A. LEACH

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, every society has a historian who suggests that failure to study history is an invitation to repeat its mistakes. With his recent utterances, the newly elected president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, may be presenting the world with a more dangerous conundrum. He has apparently looked at history and denied it, which requires each of us to come to grips with preposterousness as an international reality. To refuse to study history may invite repetition; but to deny it, particularly when it involves the greatest crime in human history, is an assault on civilized values and portends an attack on civilization itself.

Last week, President Ahmadinejad suggested that the murder of six million European Jews by the Nazis did not occur and called for Israel to be "wiped off the map." This week, after time to reconsider, he made it perfectly clear that he did not flippantly, accidentally or remorsefully express a misunderstanding. He again publicly denied the Holocaust, calling it a "myth" designed to be "above God, religion and the prophets."